

Remarks

Based on the foregoing amendments, claims 2, 3, 16, and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice, leaving claims 1, 4-15, 18, and 19 pending and at issue. Of the claims at issue, claim 1, 6, 7, and 13 are independent. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Objections to the Drawings and the Specification

The drawings were objected to as not showing reference numeral 17, which appeared in paragraph 0026 of the application. The foregoing amendments to the specification replaced the occurrence of reference numeral 17 with reference numeral 34, which appears in the drawings. The translation of the original German language document used reference numeral 17. When the German language document was revised to comply with U.S. patent practice, other occurrences of reference numeral 17 were changed to 34 for ease of readability. The reference numeral 17 in paragraph 0026 was inadvertently not changed to be 34. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that there is no need to amend the drawings of the case and the objection to the drawing should be withdrawn.

The Office action contends that the drawings do not show the feeler element and the indicator element constructed of a single part or that the single part extends through an elastic shaft. However, Figs. 1 and 2 clearly show that the feeler 32 and the indicator 30 are bent from a single piece of material, such as spring wire. It is respectfully submitted that because the feeler 32 and the indicator 30 are fabricated from the same piece of material, the feeler and the indicator are constructed of a single part. Further, the drawings show that the single part, which includes the feeler 32 and the indicator 30, includes an elastic shaft 34, which is now more clearly recited in claim 7. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that, as described above, the drawings show each of the recitations of claim 7 and, therefore, no drawing corrections are needed and the objection to the drawings should be withdrawn.

With regard to the objection that the specification failed to provide proper antecedent basis for the claim language directed to the feeler and the indicator being a single part and extending through the elastic shaft, it is respectfully submitted that at least paragraph 0025 provides support for the single part that includes an elastic shaft, as recited by the claims. In particular, lines 2-4 of paragraph 0025 indicate that the portions of the loading indicator,

which include an indicator element and a feeler, are fabricated from spring wire and reminiscent of a bent ratchet. It is respectfully submitted that the description of the indicator element and the feeler as being fabricated from spring wire in combination with the drawings showing a unitary bent item described as having both an indicator element and a feeler, provides ample written description for the language of claim 7. Withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

Reference numeral 117 in paragraph 0026 has been amended to be reference numeral 34. As explained above, the original German translation used reference numeral 17. The reference numeral 117 was a typographical error that should have been reference numeral 17, which subsequently should have been amended to be reference numeral 34. It is respectfully submitted that changing reference numeral 117 to reference numeral 34 obviates the objection to the specification due to informalities.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 1 and 7, which are cosmetic and made to clarify the claims, eliminate any indefiniteness that may have existed. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claims 3, 4, and 6 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and to include all the limitations of the base claim. Claims 7-12 were indicated to be allowable if amended to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Claims 17-19 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By way of the foregoing amendments, the recitations of claim 2 and 3 have been written into claim 1 and should, therefore, be allowable because claim 3 was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 2 and 3 have been cancelled without prejudice and claims 4 and 5 are dependent on now-allowable claim 1. Claim 6 has been rewritten in independent form and, therefore, is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, claims 1 and 4-6 are in condition for allowance.

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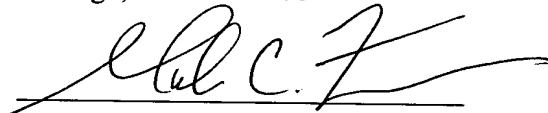
As indicated above, claim 7 has been clarified to remove any indefiniteness that may have existed. Therefore, claims 7-12 are also in condition for allowance.

The recitation of claim 16 and objected-to claim 17 have been incorporated into claim 13 and, therefore, claim 13 should be in condition for allowance. Claims 16 and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice and remaining claims 14, 15, 18, and 19 depend from allowable claim 13 and should likewise be allowable.

Reconsideration of the application and allowance thereof are respectfully requested. If there is any matter that the examiner would like to discuss, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,
Grossman & Flight, LLC
20 North Wacker Drive
Suite 4220
Chicago, Illinois 60606

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Mark C. Zimmerman
Reg. No. 44,006
Attorney for Applicants
312.580.1020